

What is claimed is:

[Claim 1] A method of forming an ad-hoc network consisting of:
broadcasting or multi-casting from at least a first network interface on
a first network capable device at least one data packet including a
request to join an ad-hoc network and a profile of the requesting
device,
receiving at a second network interface on a second network capable
device a request to join an ad-hoc network;
responding from the second network device to the first network device
with a confirmation of receipt and a profile of the responding device.

[Claim 2] The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the initial
request to join is further broadcast or multi-cast from the second
network device.

[Claim 3] The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the first
network device may additionally broadcast or multi-cast packets
requesting an identifying response from every network device capable
of joining the network and within range.

[Claim 4] The method as claimed in claim 3 wherein the packets
adhere to the IP protocol and the range is set by the TTL (time to live)
information of an IP header.

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[Claim 5] The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the transmitted profile includes an ID unique to the profile, the ID containing information based on the device address and profile.

[Claim 6] The method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the profile includes information on the device user name, the ad-hoc network license identification and the MAC address.

[Claim 7] The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein if the network capable device is capable of operating on differing network mediums it transmits packets in all mediums.

[Claim 8] The method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the network mediums include at least one wireless medium.

[Claim 9] The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the network capable device is a computer and the presence of responding devices is shown on the computer display.

[Claim 10] The method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the presence of a responding device is as an icon on the computer display and wherein operations on the icon can show information on the profile or send a user message to the network device represented by the icon.

[Claim 11] The method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the computer may maintain a list of contactable network devices.

[Claim 12] The method as claimed in claim 11 wherein the list may include an attribute which prevents display of that network device presence.

[Claim 13] The method as claimed in claim 9 wherein a computer may have more than a single profile.

[Claim 14] The method of claim 11 wherein the profiles are managed remotely via HTTP or HTTPS.

[Claim 15] An apparatus for forming an ad-hoc network consisting of:

a network capable device with at least one network interface
the network interface being programmed to:

- (a) contact adjacent network devices with information on the profile of the network capable device;
- (b) respond to a request for information from a similar network capable device with information on its own profile
- (c) forward received profiles to other network capable devices.

[Claim 16] An apparatus as claimed in claim 15 wherein the network capable device is a computer.

[Claim 17] The apparatus as claimed in claim 16 wherein the computer is wireless capable.

[Claim 18] The apparatus as claimed in claim 16 wherein the network uses TCP/IP protocol and the radius of the network from an individual device is set by the TTL parameter.

[Claim 19] The apparatus as claimed in claim 18 wherein the number of network hops to an individual device may be shown on a

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users display, unless the device owner sets a parameter preventing viewing that information.